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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1896.

THIS PAPER RECEIVES THE COMBINED TELEGRAPHIC-NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN ASSOCIATED PRESS, THE UNITED PRESS, THE WESTERN ASSOCIATED PRESS, THE NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATED PRESS, AND THE ASSOCIATED PRESS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK.

CONGRESS AND ITS WORK.

The Fifty-fourth Congress will meet to-morrow and will stay in session "plumb" to the 4th of March, when its term expires.

This short session would be barren of great interest, were it not for the Cuban question. As it is—or is to be—everybody will wish to see what the President will say about Cuba in his message, and what Congress will do thereupon.

There are speculators who would give thousands of dollars to know exactly what position the President will take. If the message is "warlike" there will be no little of a "furore" in the bond and stock market. If it be peaceable, it may be expected that the market will be stronger, and that there will be a general rise in values. And so, if a speculator could but anticipate the contents of the forthcoming message, he might use it to great advantage. But the President isn't going to let his position be known, if he can help it. Nor can we be sure that the Cuban question will be treated in his annual message. It may be that he will make it the subject of a special message. And from a news point of view, Mr. Cleveland would better adopt the latter course. Then he would command public attention for his annual message, and his special message, too. On the other hand, should the Cuban question be treated in the annual message, most people would "skip" everything else in it and read only what he has to say of "the ever faithful Isle."

Every man, and especially every newspaper man, is entitled to conjecture what position the President will take on this important question. When Congress adjourns in the spring the President was of the opinion that the Cubans had failed to meet the requirements precedent to a recognition of their belligerency. It is not easy to see what has occurred since then to change his opinion. The Spanish are tenacious in their purpose, and the Cubans are unconquerable. But this we know—that five months past our Navy Department has been straining every nerve to put our war vessels into fighting trim, and never has this activity been more manifest than during the past few weeks. What does all this mean? Are we preparing for war? Or are we putting ourselves in a position where Spain will have to think twice before defying us?

No matter what the President may say, or fail to say, about Cuba, the members of the two houses of Congress will have their "say" on the subject. It will doubtless be a fruitful theme of discussion. Another fruitful theme will be the Dingley bill. There's likely to be a good deal of dithering about this bill, but it seems to us that it is fated not to pass. The bill of Mr. Dingley, of Maine, was introduced at the first session of this Congress, with the avowed purpose of providing additional revenue, which the government needs. It is proposed to transfer wool and some other articles from the free to the dutiable list, and make a "horizontal" increase of the other duties, equal to about 15 per cent. upon the Wilson-Gorman tariff. The Dingley bill passed the House, but never could get through the Senate. It is still upon the Senate's calendar, and might be easily reached at this session of Congress; but it is doubtful if the Republicans now care to pass it. The indications, we think, are that they will let it die a natural death—preferring that the tariff question should not be acted upon at all until Mr. McKinley comes into office.

That Mr. McKinley is willing to call an extra session of the Fifty-fifth Congress to take up the tariff seems to be conceded. The Republicans, doubtless, think they will have a majority in the Senate in favor of a high protective tariff, and that it will be in their power, after the 4th of March next, to pass any tariff bill they may care to. So, if what seems to be the plans of the party in power are carried out, the Dingley bill will be given "the go-by," and the tariff will be disposed of at a called session of Congress.

Should there be an extra session of Congress, we much doubt if the currency question would be disposed of, even if it were taken up. There are signs that the Republicans will move slowly, if they move at all, in this matter. There is some talk of appointing a so-called "non-partisan commission" to consider the sub-

ject in all of its bearings. This would mean a long, long postponement of action. As yet the advocates of State banks have not developed much strength. It remains to be seen whether they will become influential in the next Congress. Bread of another free-silver agitation may, however, make the Republicans much more liberal in this matter than they will otherwise be.

It may be that to the next administration will be reserved the duty of taking final action upon the Cuban question. It will, therefore, be interesting to recall what was said on this subject in the St. Louis platform, and we quote from that document as follows:

"From the hour of achieving their own independence the people of the United States have regarded with sympathy the struggles of other American people to free themselves from European domination. We watch with deep and abiding interest the heroic battle of the Cuban patriots against cruelty and oppression, and our best hopes go out for the full success of their determined contest for liberty."

"The Government of Spain, having lost control of Cuba, and being unable to protect the property or lives of resident American citizens, or to comply with its treaty obligations, we believe the Government of the United States should actively use its influence and good offices to restore peace and give independence to the island."

"So the Republican party believes that this government should actively use its influence and good offices to restore peace and give independence to the island."

"This seems pretty strong, but inasmuch as no particular course of conduct is laid down for our government to pursue, Mr. McKinley and his party-friends will be at liberty, it would seem, to go about the business of securing Cuba's independence in any way that they may see fit."

At any rate, we may safely conclude that in the course of the next eight or ten months we shall see very important steps taken by our government. It will be a history-making epoch, we think, for in one way or another the tariff question and the Cuban question must be disposed of, and a change must come in the better-in our industrial situation. Let us give the new administration all the latitude that it asks, and if it can mend the times let it do so, and the sooner the better.

EDWARD ATKINSON'S PLANS.

"With the compliments of Edward Atkinson," we have received a pamphlet copy of his address on "Finance and Banking," made at the dinner of the Boston Boot and Shoe Club, December 17, 1896, reprinted from the Shoe and Leather Reporter of December 25, 1896.

This Mr. Atkinson sends to members of the Southern Associated Press—whom he lately addressed on this subject—to show that he had long ago advocated a reform in our banking system.

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Of course, Mr. Atkinson knows that such a reform would not satisfy public expectation now, and we believe he has a better plan in process of development. Many of the people of the South wish to cut loose from the national-bank system, because they consider it a system devised to accumulate the greater part of the country's currency in New York, Boston, and Chicago.

We are glad that Mr. Atkinson is studying this subject. Fear of another free-silver campaign in 1896 may induce the Republican party to grant the people of the South and West some part of that relief which they have long sought; and it may be possible for Mr. Atkinson to do it. He would better adopt the latter course. Then he would command public attention for his annual message, and his special message, too. On the other hand, should the Cuban question be treated in the annual message, most people would "skip" everything else in it and read only what he has to say of "the ever faithful Isle."

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THE INAUGURATION BALL.

The Hon. Mark A. Hanna, having had a taste of political power and grandeur, shows no disposition to relinquish his eminence in his party, to retire to those shades of private life which public men so often seek for and fight so hard to keep away from.

There is much evidence going to show that Mark likes to see his name and face in the papers, and it is to his credit that he keeps on good terms with the newspaper men, and that he has a hearty handshake even for those of them who have criticised him, or have sportively depicted him as uglier and fatter than he really is.

This characteristic of Mark's goes far to indicate that he is a man of more brains than he has been credited with by some of the public. At any rate, Mark is satisfied that he is a great leader, and in this opinion the President-elect concurs. True, there are envious souls who discount his ability and laugh at his consequential airs, but their opinion is not of much importance so long as the two aforementioned persons are agreed on the main question.

Having conducted the campaign to a successful issue, Mark is now engaged in assisting in the formation of the President's Cabinet, and in taking measures to make the inauguration ball another triumph of his genius. By request of the National Committee, he is to be the commander in chief of this great social function.

If we may be allowed to read between the lines of our valued Washington contemporaries, we may say that certain local leaders there are not well pleased with Mark's prominence in the arrangements for the ball; but what are they to do; defy him?

Clearly, that wouldn't do, because he must be considered as the personal representative of the President and the McKinley party. So there is nothing for the dissatisfied Washingtonians to do but to go on with their work—"on with the dance"—with the best grace that they may be able to command. They ought to commend Mark to take the lead in everything. As Major McKinley is adverse to dancing, Mark ought to lead the dance. He has shown much nimbleness in political affairs, and there is a certain impishness in his figure that would be noticeable as it swayed to and fro consonantly with the lilting measures of the orchestra. Unless Mr. McKinley can be made to forgo the scruples that he is said to entertain on the subject of dancing, we know of no other leader so suitable for the inauguration ball as Mark. He would be a shining mark for all eyes, and would receive columns of newspaper notices.

Mark's modesty, however, may prevent him from giving himself the desired prominence in the programme of the ball, and, therefore, his personal friends in Washington would do well to busy themselves and see to it that the honor in question does not escape him.

BANKING REFORM.

The Nation, in an article on "Banking Reform," says:

"It is certain that the country is in no mood for a return to the old, miscellaneous sort of bank-note issues, which prevailed before the war, however plausible that might be to the States south of the Potomac. If the entire sort of system, could be confined to the States which believe in it and want it, the question would be very different."

The first clause of this paragraph contains a characteristic northern misrepresentation of and fling at the South; the second clause is instinct with northern selfishness and sectionalism.

As we have stated elsewhere in these columns this morning, the cause of State banks of issue does not seem to be developing very much strength. This is as it may be of the South as it is of the North. But, even were such not a fact, the Nation's fling at the South would not be robbed of its unjustness. The impression sought to be produced by the Nation in its reference to the "old, miscellaneous sort of bank-note issues," and, for that matter, throughout its entire article, is that the South before the war was wicked, and is still wedded, to a rotten banking system. The truth is, however, that, owing to prejudice, the constant glorification of the national-banking system in the great money-centres, and perversion of facts, an immense amount of ignorance prevails regarding the old State-bank system, and the important part it played in the development of the country at large.

Defective as was that system, in some respects, it was far from being as bad as the post-bellum, national-bank, financial doctrinaires have delighted to paint it. Moreover, it embraced many features which some very conservative thinkers on finance, who are independent of the national-bank influence, regard as a substantial foundation for the erection of a new currency superstructure.

It is true that here and there may be found men who honestly contend that the re-establishment of a State-bank system, just as it existed before the war, would solve the financial problem; but we believe that, as a class, the most ardent advocates of State banks of issue would not now incorporate in the system all the features of the old regime. As many see it, the greatest difficulty that would be encountered in a return to State banks of issue would be that of keeping the notes of the several banks at the same value throughout the country. Others hold that the great desideratum in making a return to the system satisfactory would be to afford greater security to the note-holder than obtained under the old plan—a good security as is behind the national-bank note—and that the accomplishment of this would carry with it the solution of the first-named difficulty. To our mind, securing the note-holder is all-important. Therein the national-banking system has a powerful recommendation.

However, the masses at the South—and, indeed, the masses at the North, outside of the banking centres—care very little for any system as a system. What they want, what their necessities demand, is a reform in banking that will give a greater volume of stable currency and a wider distribution thereof, with that currency not subject to sudden contractions and to the control of the New York financiers. These they recognize as the three things needful to the restoration of prosperity. What is more, the masses will never be satisfied until such reform has been inaugurated. Say what the Wall Street organs may as to the meaning of the word of last November, the currency question will never be settled so long as our financial system remains unchanged. The South will meet the rest of the country half way in any reform in banking, that would give relief to the whole country, and would not, like the Nation, be indifferent to the evils that an unwise currency system might inflict, "provided the evils could be confined to the States" which

believed in that unwise system and wanted it.

Pennsylvania has a prison scandal. In recent court proceedings in Philadelphia, it was developed that many inmates of the Eastern Penitentiary in that city were insane, and without the attention which should be given to insane people, and that, too, although Pennsylvania has a law providing for the removal of insane convicts from the prisons to the asylums.

Judge Gordon, before whom the revelation was made, says that in no instance did the warden of the prison or the prison physician make any effort for the transfer of an insane prisoner. The Judge is convinced that the administration of the prison has a tendency to produce insanity, and he intends "to call more attention to the general subject, both in the Legislature and in other courts, that something may be done to put Pennsylvania in the line of civilization and humanity in the treatment of its criminal insane."

It is alleged that one cause of the prevalence to such an extent of insanity in the prison is a law under which the prisoners are maintained in idleness.

In the New York Times of yesterday we find a telegram from Chicago stating that members of the United States Senate have been sounded on the question of passing a bill to legalize pooling, under certain conditions, and that it is learned that the majority are opposed to the proposition. The telegram further says that "the railroad companies are disappointed, as they had been counting on getting favorable legislation at this session."

It is stated that the opposition of the senators is found in the fact that "more pressing matters of public interest will engross the time of Congress; and numerous senators, representing States whose people are opposed to the pooling idea, will have to go before their legislatures for re-election." It is further said that "there are other senators who would vote against any kind of a pooling bill on principle." Most of the southern senators would be of this number, we think.

Atlanta is to have a new census of its population taken. The work is to be done by contract, and the cost will be \$50. It is expected that the result will show that Atlanta has a vastly larger population than it had in 1890, when the United States census enumerators found 65,531 people living there.

As soon as our manufacturers are employing their usual number of men, and business here is at the normal stage, we should like to see a new census of our city made. The census of 1890 only gave us a population of 18,358, which was always considered a low figure—and one not doing us full justice.

"English Harry," a confidence man, who has at last fallen into the hands of the New York police, has nearly always confined his operations to lawyers. He confesses that he has swindled hundreds of these, and moreover, he declares that they are the best sort of "game," as they "squeal." Rather than admit that they have been trapped by a simple confidence trick they keep "mum." Harry asserts that he swindled Ben Butler as sharp a man as ever lived—out of \$2,200. Butler stood the loss and never said a word about it.

It is said that Mr. Hanna has a socially ambitious better half and two beautiful and accomplished young-lady daughters, and that these members of his family are anxious to shine in the high society "whirl" of Washington. This may be the much-asked-about matter with Hanna, after all.

The Cause of It.

Three days and nights the trial held in tireless continuity; Was it because of summing up With modern perpetuity? Or that the panel did exhaust The poll-list alphabetical? Ah, no! Some lawyer'd interposed A question hypothetical.

A Strain.

"It's funny," said the invalid, In delicious sort of key; "But 'twas a fit of laughter, sir, That wrought my injury." "Ha, ha!" the doctor cried, as he To merriment gave birth; "Then your affliction may in truth Be called a 'strain of mirth.'"

His Excuse.

"See, here, you black rascal! You didn't come around yesterday, as you promised, to shovel off my walk." "No, sah. Yo' see, mer own walk needn't erthen't to mighty bad, sah."

"Why, you miserable reprobate, you live in the woods; and have no walk that needs any attention." "Beg pardon, sah; but I 'fers ter de walk dat I walks wid, sah. Yo' see, I be erthen't a meetin' er de 'Clety fo' de Perwenshin er Licker's Sollen,' an' ef yo' see de way I zigzaggs home 'om dar, yo'd er seed right erway dat mer walk was in dat shape dat I couldn't erthen't ter no udder walk. Dar hain't no doubts erbout dat, sah."

What Surprised Him.

Reformer: Of course, in the line of your calling, you must attend the theatre very often? Critic: Quite often; yes, sir.

Reformer: As a result of that attendance, hasn't it struck you as the most surprising thing in the world that so many people go out between the acts? Critic: Hardly. According to my impressions, the most surprising thing is that more people do not go out during the acts.

Titled, Indeed.

Professed Count (to little brother of American heiress): Do you know, my little lad, that I am from England? Little Lad: Yes, sir.

Professed Count: And do you know, too, that I have a title? Little Lad: Yes, sir. Two of 'em. Sir calls you "His Lugs," and pa calls you "fakie."

Just from the Jail.

First Convict: I wish some newspaper-man would come along and interview me.

Second Convict: What good would that do you? First Convict: Why, they're said to be great at drawing a man out.

Presumptive Savagery.

Jester: That dentist friend of yours must be an awfully savage fellow.

Questioner: What makes you think so? Jester: Why, to every one that even passes his place of business he shows his teeth.

The Modern Way.

Lipper: Your son is at home from college now, I see.

Chippier: Yes.

Lipper: I hear him every morning as I pass, declaiming in robust and high-sounding sentences, that would overtax the understanding of the average student of our language. I suppose he is studying to become an eulogist?

Chippier: You are mistaken. He has an ambition above that—he is training to become a modern pugilist.

It is not unusual to see the feathers fly when the merrymen descend down Sunday fishing if they should visit the Mediterranean and see an angel-fish.

"Drawn from the wood," said the hunter, as he lifted himself from the log and prospected for the incisive splinter.

The hydropathist's favorite game—the duck.

Of Bourbon descent—the fallen inebriate.

Makes a "mess" of it—the ship's cook.

Claims of Tidewater.

(Tidewater Democrat.)

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